

2006 Conservation Districts Survey Results



Washington State
Conservation
Commission

A new survey format was developed covering a number of topics and a comments and suggestion section for feedback for the District Boards to give us their opinions on how Commission staff and our services were meeting or not meeting their needs.

Our goal with the new format was to differentiate what districts felt was 'important' as well as their 'satisfaction level' so that we could identify and focus our services and staff workload in those areas when developing our future work plan.

The survey was mailed on April 3, 2006 to the Conservation District Chair as well as to the district managers so that one survey would be completed per district so that the Boards would meet and complete together. The survey was designed to be anonymous. For their convenience we included a self-addressed stamped envelope.

Survey Response

Out of 47 districts, 33 responded which is a 70% participation rate. This is higher than in previous years.

Satisfaction of Services

In the past, surveys have shown scores of 3-4. Once again in 2005-06, the scores are within the same range.

The table below shows the total scoring with 5 = Very Satisfied, 3 = Satisfied and 1 = Not Satisfied.

Total Scoring	
District Operations Review	3.69
Capacity Building & Training	2.92
RM Services	
Internal Audit Assistance	3.85
Personnel Related Assistance	3.85
Annual or Long Range Planning	3.62
Information Sharing w/Districts	3.15
Commission Grant Review	3.62
Grant Vouchering	4.15
Grant Reporting	3.77
Annual Report	3.46
Election Procedures	3.23
Appointment Procedures	3.77
Engineering Services	3.31
Responsiveness to Phone Calls	4.15
Visits to District by Staff	3.31
Commission Website	3.62
Commission Calendar	3.69

Importance of Services

This information will be used in determining staff focus in the upcoming work plan.

The table below shows the total scoring with 5 = Very Important, 3 = Important and 1 = Not Important.

Total Scoring	
District Operations Review	3.85
Capacity Building & Training	4.09
RM Services	3.79
Internal Audit Assistance	
Personnel Related Assistance	3.91
Annual or Long Range Planning	3.60
Information Sharing w/Districts	3.91
Commission Grant Review	3.72
Grant Vouchering	4.64
Grant Reporting	3.55
Annual Report	3.28
Election Procedures	3.28
Appointment Procedures	3.79
Engineering Services	4.00
Responsiveness to Phone Calls	4.21
Visits to District by Staff	3.67
Commission Website	4.21
Commission Calendar	3.18

2006 Conservation District Survey Results

Satisfaction (Programs and Services)

NOTE: Only 28 completed both sides (see above) plus two failed to fill in the second sheet on satisfaction=26 responses gathered.

	Very Satisfied (5)	Satisfied (3)	Not Satisfied (1)	Total Scoring
District Operations Review	12	11	3	3.69
Capacity Building & Training	6	13	7	2.92
RM Services				
Internal Audit Assistance	13	11	2	3.85
Personnel Related Assistance	13	11	2	3.85
Annual or Long Range Planning	10	14	2	3.62
Information Sharing w/Districts	6	16	4	3.15
Commission Grant Review	10	14	2	3.62
Grant Vouchering	16	9	1	4.15
Grant Reporting	12	12	2	3.77
Annual Report	7	18	1	3.46
Election Procedures	7	15	4	3.23
Appointment Procedures	11	14	1	3.77
Engineering Services	10	10	6	3.31
Responsiveness to Phone Calls	15	11	0	4.15
Visits to District by Staff	7	16	3	3.31
Commission Website	10	14	2	3.62
Commission Calendar	11	13	2	3.69

	SATISFACTION
District Operations Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Still unclear how this makes us more accountable or improves our service when all other audits are considered. Unsure when was last completed. Haven't had ours yet. Schedule reviews and send list to district so they know when the reviews will be taking place. Do a more complete program audit. Have not had the benefit of a DOR yet. Look forward to the opportunity for input and information. Very helpful, excellent.

	SATISFACTION
Capacity Building and Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Support employee & supervisor training at WACD & WACD. ▪ Landowner project signs; program to assist CDs in purchasing used government vehicles. ▪ I appreciate the new grant opportunities. ▪ WSCC should identify necessary program skill sets, inventory district capacity, create training program through WADE. It is too important matter to leave to the CDs. Relevant training is difficult to find. ▪ More training options and training for supervisors. ▪ Funding. ▪ Need more funding. ▪ Need to change requirements. ▪ We need a small pot of funding to ramp up the political issues of the district, i.e., bringing cities into the district boundaries. ▪ Training opportunities are limited, as are funding opportunities. ▪ More funding available to meet demand. ▪ The Capacity Building Grant was very helpful. It would have been more helpful if we had a full year to work on it, as it turned out we had only 6 months, limiting our flexibility. And, after trying to squeeze it in to 6 months, we then found out we were ineligible to apply for 2007. We need something like this (or additional basic funding) just to keep the doors open and keep a good staff (we don't have NRCS support and have high fixed costs from rent, etc.) The Capacity Grant has helped get training for folks too-some of our funding sources (BPA) only allow training that is directly aimed at the BPA contract. The Capacity Grant has also allowed us to begin investigating an assessment. ▪ Supervisors Handbook Update and 10-minute Supervisor ▪ The training this spring was great. More regional training instead of trying to fit everything into WADE. ▪ Provide more training for Supervisors. ▪ More flexible funds are needed by districts, as well as assistance to obtain funds. There are gaps in most district budgets for addressing these needs. ▪ Tom Salzer is a huge help and gaining new ideas to us. Long term assistance is our biggest need. ▪ We'd like to see personnel training available thru the Commission – perhaps a library of resources including videos on topics such as sexual harassment, team building, safety, etc.

	SATISFACTION
Regional Manager Services	
A. Internal Audit Assistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regional manager is a valuable resource for our district. Tremendous opportunity to brainstorm ideas and discuss strategic initiatives. Provide realistic audit report form, checklist, templates, and assist with audit. Have not yet conducted an internal audit with the RM present. Look forward to this opportunity. I'm happy with the current status and feel information is useful. Attend district internal audits so that our district auditor and staff can ask questions and seek additional guidance during the process.
B. Personnel-related Assistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Could be more helpful in supplying examples of good policies and information. Did not really ask for any help. Provide standard policies, procedures, templates, guidance for districts to use or adapt. The RM has provided valuable guidance in personnel related matters. I'm happy with the current status and feel information is useful. We'd like to have access to a template for personnel manuals, employee handbooks, etc.
C. Annual or Long-Range Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New process is still sinking in and not sure the forced format works as well for our CD as our own "old" format. We need more clarification on the long range plan and how we can adapt it to meet our needs and the RCW. Adequate. Need more time – good assistance. Keep helping with workshops. Ray and Bill were great help – could not have done this without their help. Have not yet engaged the RM in our long range planning activities. Look forward to the opportunity to do this in the near future. I'm happy with the current status and feel information is useful. Provide information to districts about hot topics with the legislature and other things that could/should be considered when developing land range plans.
D. Information Sharing within Districts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be clearer on grant funding applications RE: how much is available for each district to apply for and whether or not the funding can be re-applied for in subsequent rounds. Lack of communication prevented this district from applying for the full amount available on the first round and poor communication/decision on WSCC's part resulted in confusion on whether this district could re-apply. We assume you meant "between" districts.

	SATISFACTION
D. Information Sharing within Districts, cont'd.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Would like to have more information from other districts. Set up a quarterly meeting between managers to discuss activities going on in the region/area. We really appreciated Bill sending his schedule out and would like to see that continue. ▪ Commission should be clearing house and source of information, policies, procedures, etc., so each district doesn't have to recreate. ▪ Essential component in building stronger district and allowing for idea sharing and collaboration. ▪ I'm happy with the current status and feel information is useful. ▪ Help with the development of a form for managers/supervisors. Help with the development of a clearinghouse for upcoming grant programs and deadlines that districts could access.
Commission Grant Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Still unclear how this makes us more accountable or improves our service when all other audits are considered. ▪ Should provide if requested to assist with training of new employees. ▪ WSCC needs to lead on the issue of how program funds are distributed. It should conduct field reviews to ensure funds are effectively spent. The situation seem to be improving, however, the process and allocations for the livestock program leave a lot to be desired. (we have a clear bias) ▪ FOM should promote district programs and work during board visits. ▪ Schedule reviews and send list to districts so they know when the reviews will be taking place. These are supposed to be every other year. When was the last one for Asotin? The state auditor questioned me about this. ▪ Be more in depth. Several of our questions were not adequately answered. ▪ The information provided before the review was excellent. The experience was beneficial to understanding of the Commission requirements. ▪ Board would like to see the staff come see the projects and district resource needs. ▪ I'm happy with the current status and feel information is useful. ▪ No other granting agencies perform this task. We appreciate the potential value of the review process, but feel it's redundant with the amount of backup we must already provide with vouchers.

	SATISFACTION
Grant Vouchering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Can't begin to describe how much better WSCC is compared to DOE. About the same as other funding sources. ▪ Should provide if requested to assist with training of new employees – recommend better communication regarding policy changes. ▪ Could be simpler, but is better than it was. ▪ Less burdensome. ▪ More burdensome. ▪ Quit changing formats. ▪ They are all a pain! Staff are very helpful however. ▪ It is becoming more burdensome. ▪ More burdensome. More detail is required for commission grants since we need to break all of our work out into individual outcomes. We think that we spend a lot of time breaking out details in a relatively small grant. ▪ More detailed than DOE. ▪ It is getting to be more burdensome. The turn around time has increased and the extra scrutiny will decrease landowner interest in participating in WSCC cost-share programs. ▪ Seems to be equal to other grants. ▪ Less burdensome, but more so each grant cycle. What is difference between "less burdensome" and "not as burdensome"? ▪ The process is less burdensome than DOE. Personnel changes in your office have caused some fluctuation in requirements that is frustrating. This appears to be improving. ▪ Not burdensome at all, equivalent to some, but less than most. No complaints. ▪ More burdensome. There is too much backup required when compared to other granting agencies. How about making a request for the additional back up when it's truly needed to clarify something? No other agencies require copies of timesheets, etc. the number of recent changes in how the vouchering is required to be reported has cost a significant amount of time and effort to streamline our systems to provide this information (i.e., report by task, objective). There are no requirements by any other granting agency of this kind. It has been extremely burdensome to make these changes with each new contract period.
Grant Reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Grant reporting is an accepted annoyance. ▪ Less – easy forms. ▪ It is less burdensome, but might be missing the details of the projects since only asking for number of widgets per dollar spent. ▪ We feel we need more space to fully verbalize what we accomplish.

	SATISFACTION
Grant Reporting, cont'd.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Less burdensome. ▪ Great form. ▪ User friendly. ▪ Grant obligations need to be reported for accountability. ▪ Harder than DOE. ▪ I need reminders! I am not always clear about which reports are due and when. ▪ More burdensome. More detail is required for commission grants since we need to break all of our work out into individual outcomes. We think that we spend a lot of time breaking out details in a relatively small grant. ▪ The current grant reports don't give the real information showing what the districts do. Hopefully, the narrative part that is being added will do a better job capturing more than just the numbers. ▪ Others are narrative only; WSCC request both styles, number collecting and narrative. ▪ Not necessarily more burdensome, but more difficult because form does not always relate specifically to grant. ▪ Wish all my grant reporting was as user friendly as the WSCC. ▪ Other than TSP, it is less burdensome. ▪ Grant reporting makes for longer time sheets, but much simpler reporting in the long run and in all aspects. ▪ Less burdensome. This truly helps us spread our dollars further into our on the ground work. Since Commission grants are typically less than \$50,000 this is really important.
Annual Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Still don't see how these are being effectively used at the state level. ▪ Easy format – printed book great tool for CDs. ▪ Quit changing. ▪ The template is useful and made preparation of the report easier. It has been interpreted differently by different districts. ▪ This is important to take to the legislature but expensive to create. Ask districts in advance how many copies they need and don't send one to each supervisor unless the district requests it. It is very expensive for the amount of use on a local level. Cutting costs where we can shows we are financially responsible. ▪ Annual report should correspond to fiscal year. Either change annual report year or fiscal year. ▪ Grant reporting makes for longer time sheets, but much simpler reporting in the long run and in all aspects. (6-7 go together!) ▪ More guidance about the types of things you really want to see would be helpful. Suggest sending out a couple really good examples (from your perspective) from other

	SATISFACTION
	districts to help us.
Election Procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Always looking for ways to make this more efficient. Need to streamline – too much paperwork. Time frames don't match up with completion of basic funding application talks. A notary should be able to administer oath of polling officers. Read state law. Needs better process. Make sure district elections are not put back on county ballots. We got lots of help – thanks for the help. Very important to our production. Need recommendation for improvement. Elections need a complete overhaul and Commission needs to take lead. Long term concerns on the number of voters we have had. We'd like financial assistance with the costs of elections – it takes a lot out of our on the ground money.
Appointment Procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Easy procedure – should ask for bio or resume to assist with selection process. Should have a standard application form that elicits relevant info. Should not leave up to area commissioner to bird dog. Send letter to WSCC makes appointment. This CD did not receive a copy for this year's appointed supervisor (the appointed super visor did receive a letter - only a blanket email from regional manager. Need recommendation for improvement. Appointment procedures can be awkward locally, especially with repeat appointments.
Engineering Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Almost completely unable to keep an engineer on staff because of poor compensation. Not as useful as hoped for – long delays to get projects done. Too much work for one engineer. Need to revisit to see if current capacity is appropriate. Are there enough to accomplish cluster workloads? NRCS need for TSP assistance suggests not. Need adequate funding for cluster engineer to devote full time to district needs. Understaffed, very satisfied with services. We've been very satisfied since 2003. We do think our cluster engineer has a very high workload. The cluster engineer does an excellent job scheduling projects. Without his assistance some projects could not get done. Keep up the good work and funding!

	SATISFACTION
Engineering Services, cont'd.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Let districts decide how best to fulfill their engineering needs. Provide funding. Essential component of district success in working with landowners. Need more. Our engineer is excellent and there are many projects we could not do without the services. We suggest that the Commission look at the clusters again. For those districts that are over an hour away from their cluster engineer, we suggest that the commission consider giving that districts' engineering dollars directly to them so that we can either hire a private engineer or utilize ours, depending on costs.
Responsiveness to Phone Calls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most communication via email – all staff very responsive. Would be helpful to send reminders via email about upcoming special funding/opportunities (example was the scholarship for WADE – a reminder of the due date would have been helpful). Very responsive, particularly Kristy McGuill and Butch Ogden. Grants staff do excellent job. RM doesn't always respond in a timely manner. Very happy with the timeliness in calls returned. Questions are answered quickly. Special thanks to Debbie Becker, Cheryl Witt, Tom Salzer and Mark Clark. Have received excellent response in all contacts. When an answer is not available, it is hunted down and provided! We rely heavily on email and it works! Tom Salzer is EXCELLENT! There is room for a bit of improvement. More consistency in being responsive and providing follow up on status of requests by districts would be helpful. Often times, I have to send a reminder email or follow up email to our RM because I don't receive a response. I understand that he is busy, but when I request assistance, it's typically time sensitive.
Visits to District by WSCC Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We feel WSCC staff visits are vital to hearing and understanding issues and getting helpful information. We grant the distance is difficult, but there are other options, such as video conferencing. Always need help from Bill. Great, but expendable. Our regional manager covers a large area and we are quite a bit of travel for him. With the amount of new grant staff hired recently, we need more visits. On the ground visits remind us how diverse this state is and that we need to work together to make statewide programs work for everyone. More frequent visits would be good.

	SATISFACTION
Visits to District by WSCC Staff, cont'd.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ All visits by Commissioners and staff have been appreciated and highly valued. ▪ Seeing the resource needs of the district is very valuable. ▪ Tom Salzer is EXCELLENT! ▪ We'd like to see our regional manager present at board meetings at least quarterly or when pertinent items are in the agenda. We'd also suggest that the RM visit the district on at least one other occasion during the month to meet with the manager on relevant matters.
Commission Website	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ It's good when I use it but I don't every day or necessarily every week. ▪ Great reference tool. ▪ The search engine for the website is still frustrating. We have tried to find information that we know is there, but yet can not get the search to bring it up. ▪ Need updated forms and good examples of vouchering sheets, timesheets, comp rates, personnel policies, etc. ▪ It is very helpful – grant applications and forms are easily obtained. ▪ It can be hard to navigate, but there is a lot of very important information on the website. ▪ Make more user friendly and easier to navigate. ▪ Please continue to keep the file cabinet stuff updated. We refer to it constantly. ▪ Very useful for PCD. ▪ File cabinet. ▪ The file cabinet needs improvement. It's not very easy to find what you're looking for. We suggest adding a calendar of events. Post other districts plant sales, board meetings, NRCS meetings, PS Forum meetings, task force meeting, etc. Add a page for grants that are out there that meet our work with links to websites for the applications and include the deadlines on the list.
Commission Calendar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Where is it? ▪ Recommend online format rather than printed version. ▪ Those of us who use the calendar appreciate this great tool and depend on it for keeping on track of activities. ▪ It's hard to use. ▪ Not very user friendly. Due dates need reminders of time lag between mailing and arrival at WSCC. Might be helpful to use a different format, such as NRCS "200-Activity Schedule" which is a good calendar. ▪ Useful. ▪ We don't find it that useful.

	SATISFACTION
Commission Calendar, cont'd.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Don't use it much. ▪ Supervisors didn't know about it. Due to its glossy surface, you can't write on it. ▪ Put a summary sheet together in the front with all the important dates so you don't have to flip through the calendar to find a deadline date. ▪ Every board member should receive a calendar. ▪ Very useful for PCD. ▪ It helps us remember important dates. Thank you! Suggest adding district plant sale dates and district board meetings to the calendar.

Importance (Programs and Services)

Note: Received 33 Surveys out of 47 (five filled out just the first page of Importance)

	Very Important (5)	Important (3)	Not Important (1)	Total Scoring
District Operations Review	16	15	2	3.85
Capacity Building & Training	19	13	1	4.09
RM Services				3.79
Internal Audit Assistance	17	12	4	
Personnel Related Assistance	18	12	3	3.91
Annual or Long Range Planning	12	19	2	3.60
Information Sharing w/Districts	16	13	4	3.91
Commission Grant Review	14	17	2	3.72
Grant Vouchering	27	6	0	4.64
Grant Reporting	10	22	1	3.55
Annual Report	15	15	3	3.28
Election Procedures	15	15	3	3.28
Appointment Procedures	16	14	3	3.79
Engineering Services	23	6	4	4.00
Responsiveness to Phone Calls	21	11	1	4.21
Visits to District by Staff	12	20	1	3.67
Commission Website	20	13	0	4.21
Commission Calendar	10	16	7	3.18

	IMPORTANCE
District Operations Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Who gains by this? Should be performed within a year of significant staff changes, i.e., DM or Administrator, especially if requested. Necessary evil. Keeps us up to date and a good checklist. Helps district to stay on track, process is good. Only if new supervisors or employees are involved would this be meaningful – otherwise it is only a confirmation tool for the commission staff to identify basic administrative compliance standards are being met. Generally it has been viewed as a waste of district time. Keeps us out of legal trouble. Could be more important if more in-depth like a program audit. Helpful to have a view from outside the fishbowl. I have nothing but good things to say about WSCC reviews and assistance provided to PCD staff. We'd like to see the WSCC look even closer at the types of things that state auditor discovers in their audits of CDs across the state when performing the District Operations Review. By catching these mistakes and errors prior to our state audits, we can take actions to correct such errors prior to receiving a finding or administrative letter.
Capacity Building & Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Give more specifics of what activities qualify. Need to do more training in smaller groups, grant writing, admin laws, and updates from WSCC, not only at WADE. Not needed except for new supervisors. The Board was disappointed in the last/first round of capacity building grants. We submitted two but received none! We've asked for a critique of our application but were never given a good explanation. How can we improve without any feedback? More and more we are being asked to facilitate or attend meetings but, don't have the funding to do so. WSCC needs to take leading role in identifying program expertise needs and responding with training through WADE. The funding source is very important for financially challenged districts such as ours. Commission could work better with districts on how to apply and provide more feedback on outcome. Probably particularly important for districts with limited funding or grants that do not allow

	IMPORTANCE
Capacity Building & Training, cont'd.	<p>certain elements of capacity building.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ If there are not adequate funds to address everyone's concerns, only a select few can participate resulting in counter productive labor to just reconfirm that we all need more funding. ■ Revive 10-minute Supervisor Series. ■ More regional trainings! ■ Timing is an issue, typically wrong time of year. Winter is a better time. ■ Provide more training. ■ Districts need flexible funding that enables new initiatives to be developed. These funds should be available to all districts who can identify new initiatives that will strengthen district operations. ■ A little early to tell, but the opportunity is new and the options seem to open many new doors. ■ Ray Ledgerwood. ■ Help districts find dollars for training. We'd like to see personnel training available thru the Commission – perhaps a library of resources including videos on topics such as sexual harassment, team building, safety, etc. districts need a good template for employee manuals, policy manuals, and management procedures. Too many districts are all across the board. We need a clearing house of information. Work with the legislature to allow districts access to State Motor Pool. We need these low cost services to help us stretch our dollars. Continue the capacity building grant program for districts in need.
Regional Manager Services A. Internal Audit Assistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Board supervisors usually need guidance with this. Should be given from someone outside agency. ■ Necessary evil. ■ Not needed at all. ■ We have not used his services for the internal audit. ■ We are enormously grateful for Tom Salzer and the work he does to keep us on the right track. It is invaluable to have someone to bounce issues off of and get answers that protect the district. ■ Only if new supervisors or administrative staff are involved would this be meaningful. ■ This is very nice. Having someone outside the district reviewing things provides a fresh set of eyes and can help catch problems before a state audit. ■ Act as third party and reviews the legal topics, taxes, etc. ■ Not receiving services from RM but would like to. ■ We appreciate outside input and guidance. Would appreciate more guidance in this regard with standardized policies, etc.

	IMPORTANCE
A. Internal Audit Assistance, cont'd.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Anything to assist staff and board with audits is an excellent opportunity. Other information as well. Consider training the district auditors to perform this function each year. By catching our mistakes earlier on, we can correct problems and/or issues earlier.
B. Personnel-related Assistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most Board supervisors are not familiar with human resources and need direction occasionally. Great to have someone to ask special questions. We know it by now. When needed, super important. We are enormously grateful for Tom Salzer and the work he does to keep us on the right track. It is invaluable to have someone to bounce issues off of and get answers that protect the district. Anything to assist staff and board with personnel related issues is an excellent opportunity. Other information as well. We need a good template for policies and process. Access to an employment law attorney for little or no fee would be invaluable for districts to access.
C. Annual or Long-Range Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A list of potential examples goals would be helpful to help focus supervisor. Need assistance from Commission. We need help with this still. Ray is very helpful to us. Critical to have available for occasional (don't need every year) strategic planning sessions. Bill presents the RCW overview and assists in answering board questions. Ray facilitates. We have functioned okay without services of RM. Should be higher priority. This is an area the Commission could provide technical assistance to districts. Anything to assist staff and board with planning is an excellent opportunity. Other information as well. Ray Ledgerwood is a wonderful resource! We hope that the Commission can keep him around to assist districts with planning and training.
D. Information Sharing within Districts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can be done by staff and supervisors. ? Not sure this is a job for WSCC – it's up to the CDs. Our annual Northeast Area CD meeting is a great format to share ideas between districts with similar interests.

	IMPORTANCE
D. Information Sharing within Districts, cont'd.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Generally, we are able to connect well with our sister districts. However, when manager is facilitating a process like for the PS Initiative, this is critically important. ▪ All parties could work more on communication and reporting. ▪ Other districts may find this a higher priority that we do. If funding and time allow, it is important, but lots can be done inexpensively and expeditiously to network with other districts. ▪ We assumed this meant "between" districts and not "within". ▪ Would like to see more of this. ▪ We really don't hear too much about what other districts are doing or what is taking place. ▪ Perhaps, most important function of RM, but not meeting our expectations. ▪ It would be nice to have a database that all districts could use and adapt to store conservation planning information and BMPs. This could save time when creating grant reports. ▪ Managers meeting – facilitation of rotating quarterly district manager meeting. ▪ Anything to assist staff and board with information sharing is an excellent opportunity. Other information as well. ▪ N/A ▪ It would be desirable to have more collaboration between districts. How about a web-based (email) forum where questions could be put out to all CDs for response and input? How about a clearinghouse of grant opportunities/due dates that are available and relevant to our work? This is something that could be included on the Commission website.
Commission Grant Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Who gains by this? ▪ Great training tool for new staff – provide one if requested. ▪ Necessary evil for all! ▪ A necessary evil. ▪ CGR didn't catch the many problems we found we had with our last financial assistant! ▪ Helps when it is done at the CD w/ WSCC staff member. T can help to highlight problem areas. ▪ More field review of district performance. For e.g., what are CREP districts who are not delivering projects doing with the money? Are districts doing what they should? ▪ Excellent benchmarking process to avoid errors and omissions. ▪ Only if new supervisors or employees are involved would this be meaningful – otherwise it is only a confirmation tool for the commission staff to identify basic administrative compliance standards are being met. Generally it has been viewed as a waste of district time. ▪ Keeps us out of audit trouble. Verifies that we are accountable.

	IMPORTANCE
Commission Grant Review, cont'd.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Could be more important if more in-depth like a program audit. ▪ Extremely informative. Helps give a better overall perspective of the requirements placed on districts by the Commission. ▪ Excellent. ▪ The WSC grant staff is very thorough when processing vouchers, we're not certain that this extra step is necessary for us, but recognize that it may be for Commission staff.
Grant Vouchering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Process & forms have been streamlined – much easier to complete; great response/assistance from WSCC staff. ▪ Thank God you have staff! ▪ Keep materiality in mind when reviewing vouchers. ▪ We would like to have a running total on the front page of the voucher. ▪ A good grant vouchering system is necessary to maintain accountability. Staff assistance has been outstanding. ▪ Changes in policies and financial offices needs to be communicated better. ▪ Consistency. ▪ Would like to have a running balance on front page of voucher. ▪ Debbie Skogen and Cheryl Witt will be greatly missed! There are issues where compromise must be considered rather than arbitrarily changing established practices with a change of personnel. ▪ This is very important since most district have limited funds. A quick turn around is crucial. ▪ Keeps us out of audit trouble. ▪ Not sure what to say. If we say "not important", do we have the option of getting block grants rather than vouchering? ▪ Aside from numerous changes to the process that have occurred lately, most guidance provided in vouchering has been beneficial. ▪ Excellent. ▪ System needs to be more streamlined so that the process is more closely in line with requirements of other granting agencies. There is too much back-up required when compared to other granting agencies. As a conservation group, we should be conserving our resources. Therefore, we suggest that if additional back up is needed to verify an expense, you contact the district rather than requiring all backup be sent with the vouchers. Districts are already required to keep this documentation in their files for audit purposes by the state, along with any granting agency. New commission staff should be more familiar with contracts so that there are not unnecessary requests made to district staff on items included in the contracts and easily accessible to Commission staff. This will also assist in timelier processing of district vouchers.

	IMPORTANCE
Grant Reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ We accept this as a required annoyance. ▪ Would like to reduce the workload somehow. ▪ Biannually is <u>much</u> better than monthly or quarterly. ▪ Not sure how it is being used. ▪ Question effectiveness. ▪ Make sure districts are accountable and they do what they say they are going to do. ▪ Appreciate the abbreviated format implemented in the last few years. ▪ Responding to requests that ask how many people we talk to, respond with and basically interact with has requires an increased amount of documentation labor. ▪ Important, especially for legislative information. ▪ Helps to reveal the accomplishments achieved through the grant. ▪ We are happy with the new grant reporting requirements and reporting forms. Less frequent reporting results in more money to spend getting projects on the ground.
Annual Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reports are eating up too much time – trying to get too detailed. The second page format penalizes active districts while giving a false impression of less active districts. ▪ Great snapshot of accomplishments – can it be tied to long range plan? ▪ A great way to glean from other districts work that is being done. In the last edition some of the photos were mis-marked. ▪ Report on what commission is requesting. No request for info on other district activities projects/progress. ▪ Appreciate the look and the abbreviation. ▪ The collection of district annual reports provides an impressive document identifying state wide conservation accomplishments which should support future public implementation funding programs. ▪ Important, especially for legislative information. ▪ An excellent tool to reveal the accomplishments the district has achieved. ▪ Helps to share information about what different districts have accomplished; what they focus on, where they had success, etc. ▪ We understand there is a new format to be used this year. We'll weigh in once we've seen that. We do appreciate the booklet of all CDs annual reports. It gives us grant ideas and the opportunity to see the broad range of services other districts provide.

	IMPORTANCE
Election Procedures Election Procedures, cont'd.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Combine Oath of Officers & Ballot Results into one form. Nomination petition to cumbersome. ▪ Keeps us all legal! ▪ Always needs improving but CC does best job they can with a terrible election law. ▪ Cumbersome procedure – timelines not well laid out and can be confusing. ▪ Needs to be a better process. ▪ Certainty that elections will not go to county ballots. ▪ Having help was great. It is important to do this right the first time. ▪ Having just completed our first mail-in election, I found the directions/procedures easy to accomplish, affordable and pretty efficient. ▪ The AG interpretive rules have resulted in increased costs and for some rural communities the public disclosure change is reducing potential candidate interest. ▪ Is there an option? ▪ Orientation for new administrators to assure no crucial steps are overlooked.
Appointment Procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Keeps us all legal! ▪ Good. ▪ Insure that the CC consults with chair before appointment is made. ▪ Commission needs to send written notice on supervisor appointments. This did not occur for appointment, only for election. ▪ District Ops Committee and others working to streamline and improve this process. ▪ With commission reminders prior to advertising timelines the services provided are adequate. ▪ Is there an option?
Engineering Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ We need to replace our engineer again in Central WA. ▪ Engineering Grant has not been as useful as we had hoped. Management appears to be personality driven. ▪ Don't use much but is nice to have. ▪ Needed and valuable to us. ▪ Need more money – need more engineers. ▪ We need them; however, our district is not totally satisfied w/cluster engineer concept. We believe cost/project does not provide for the best use of this funding. We're considering opting for our own engineer contracted through the districts. ▪ Are there enough engineers? The backlog of NRCS practices suggests that there are not. ▪ Current funding inadequate to support full time cluster engineer. ▪ We rely heavily on the cluster engineer for Kitsap. High marks on continuing his services

	IMPORTANCE
Engineering Services, cont'd.	<p>and program.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Need more clusters – our engineer has too much work with five districts. ▪ Conceptually, this service should be extremely important, yet actual support received has been extremely limited retuning marginal to unsatisfactory and questionable results for the public dollars expended. ▪ Excellent program, could not accomplish what we do without it; fills in a lot of our county for NRCS who is without an engineer in this area. ▪ Didn't consider Commission a provider of engineering services. What is meant here? ▪ Huge demand for services and not enough financial backing so funds have to be sought elsewhere and time is limited by varied commitments. Definite need for more funding and possibly more engineers? ▪ Only under the template being used by Paul Clearly's "TEAM" ▪ Need more. ▪ The cluster program is not working well. We are too far from our PE and it takes a long time to get designs. The amount of travel time involved could be better utilized in hiring a local engineer. Consider re-clustering in those areas that are spread out so that the PEs are closer to the area they're responsible for. Consider subcontracting with firms in areas where districts are over one hour away from their cluster engineer. If clusters are to continue, we'd like to have our regional manager included in the cluster meetings.
Responsiveness to Phone Calls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Staff is always responsive in a timely manner. ▪ Most people call because of reason, not to chit-chat. ▪ Varies widely I hear. ▪ Good response from staff. ▪ Some delays in returning calls. ▪ Staff are very good about returning calls. ▪ The grant staff are excellent in returning phone calls. KUDOS to KRISTY, COULDN'T DO THIS WITHOUT HER! ▪ Grants staff are especially responsive. ▪ Answering questions in a timely fashion helps the district. This will always be an important element. ▪ WSCC staff is always responsive to PCD needs and makes WSCC attendance at board meetings less important, but welcome. ▪ Very helpful.

	IMPORTANCE
<p>Visits to District by WSCC Staff</p> <p>Visits to District by WSCC Staff, cont'd.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Butch is doing a great job. ▪ Nice every once in a while. ▪ Not usually productive but occasionally is good. ▪ We would like to see occasional visits by WSCC staff. ▪ However, we don't need frequent visits. ▪ Less and less as time goes by. ▪ Continue tours and visits to keep awareness of district needs. ▪ Helpful and appreciative when WSCC staff visit. ▪ We love the personalized attention, but if time/cost savings was needed, this is less important. ▪ Bill and Ray are stationed here. Kristy visited for the Grants Review. We hosted a WSCC tour a year ago. Other than that, we don't see the staff, now sure we need to? ▪ Face to face contact with board is helpful. ▪ Districts appreciate the interest of the Commission in district activities. Provides for an opportunity to connect with Commission staff. ▪ Like to see more from whole staff. ▪ Very important, but the PCD does understand the workload WSCC staff is under. Always nice to see WSCC staff at meetings. ▪ It would be helpful to have our RM visit board meetings with more frequency, especially when there are "hot" topics. How about at least quarterly or more frequently if there are hot topics? Would like to see RMs visit our district about once per month so we can discuss how things are going and have dialogue on important issues.
Commission Website	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Great resource. ▪ Very useful – keep it up! ▪ Search engine is bad. Need to put a revision date on all the documents and forms. ▪ Very useful. ▪ It would be helpful if the websites search had the capability of finding things in the file cabinet. When I put "survey" into the search in order to download this form, it took me to the reports of surveys only. I had to search around to find the form. ▪ Some forms not up to date – better and more up to date examples. ▪ I use this all the time – very nice to have access to reporting forms, info. ▪ We suggest doing the directory updates after elections – currently we are asked toward the end of the year. ▪ Use the file cabinet. ▪ Very important resource and tool but difficult to use. ▪ Use the site regularly and depend on it to find needed forms, policies, and other relevant factoids. Important to have a place where the public can locate information about.

	IMPORTANCE
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> File cabinet. Website needs to be more user friendly. Presently, it's rather difficult to navigate. How about a forum page for managers/Commission staff? How about a forum page for financial folks? How about a forum page for plant sale coordinators?
Commission Calendar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Important reference info but would be more useful in an electronic format. Great for updates. Keep it coming – we use it. Would rather see deadlines and other info from the calendar – put on website. Useful to district administrator and bookkeeper. We do not find it particularly applicable to our needs. Would be nice to have in Outlook form as opposed to printed document. Follow-up emails to keep district employees informed of timelines. Don't use it much – maybe the same information could be integrated into the website some how (Reminders on home page, etc.) The calendar should come out earlier. It is hard to write anything on the glossy surface, making it not that useable. We guess it costs a fair amount of money to produce; possibly it could be put on the website. Not practical for me. Too large. Should go to all supervisors. The calendar is a handy tool to remind of upcoming due dates and important events. Very helpful to managers and staff. Add CDs monthly board meetings schedules, NRCS trainings, and CDs plant sale dates so we can better align ourselves.

Notes: Districts turning in 1st Page Only (Important): 6; Districts turning in 2nd Page Only (Satisfaction): None

Comments: These questions/questionnaire was very difficult to complete. It was hard to know what was being asked for. (Although, this person filled it out completely correctly!)